

U. S. Has Super Plane

2,000 M. P. H.
INTERCEPTOR
NOW IN TESTS

World's Fastest, Johnson Says

BY ROBERT YOUNG
[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

Washington, Feb. 29—President Johnson disclosed today that the United States is test-flying a new 2,000-mile-an-hour, super-altitude warplane with a performance far exceeding that of any existing aircraft in the world.

The President disclosed further at a news conference that development of this long-range interceptor plane has been underway in secrecy since 1959.

He said technical data obtained from the new military plane will be applied to the forthcoming development of the supersonic commercial transport plane. A survey and report on the transport plane development will be made public next Monday.

Responses to Questions

Johnson also said today in response to news conference questions that:

1. South Viet Nam continues to be "a very difficult situation," but reports that the United States-supported war against the Communists in that

Asian nation has "gone to pot" are unfounded.

2. He will appoint William P. Bundy assistant secretary of state for far eastern affairs. Bundy is now assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs.

3. The Senate is considering "the possible political impact" of the Bobby Baker case and is certain to take "proper action."

4. The fact that Henry Cabot Lodge, United States ambassador to South Viet Nam, has been mentioned as a possible Republican Presidential candidate is not impairing the conduct of this country's policy in Viet Nam.

5. He is "encouraged" and not pessimistic about the outlook for eventually easing international tensions and co-existing peacefully with Russia.

3 Times Speed of Sound

The President disclosed today at the beginning of his press conference that the United States has successfully developed an advanced, experimental jet military plane—designated the A-11—which has been tested in sustained flight at a speed of more than 2,000 miles an hour at altitudes in excess of 70,000 feet.

The speed mentioned by the President is three times the speed of sound.

"The performance of the A-11 far exceeds that of any other aircraft in the world today," the President said. "The development of this aircraft . . . has been made possible by major advances in

aircraft technology of great significance to both military and commercial application."

Several Being Tested

Several A-11s, he announced, are now being flighted-tested at Edwards air force base in California.

The chief executive said the A-11 project was started in 1959. He said he was lifting the secrecy surrounding the development of the plane during the last five years "to permit the orderly exploitation of this advanced technology for our military and commercial defense." He said the advanced A-11, with its high speed, high altitude and long range, presents an "orderly technique for establishing a new standard of performance which will facilitate reduction of the number of manned airplanes and commercial requirements.

He emphasized that "in view of the extraordinary importance of these [A-50] developments to our national security," details of the plane's construction and performance will remain strictly classified secrets.

A Missile Interceptor

The Press had disclosed that the A-11s are being tested at Edwards air force base to determine their capabilities as long range interceptors.

Government sources said the F-11 is designed to intercept either enemy planes or ballistic missiles in flight. The new plane is not designed to carry nuclear bombs.

These government sources — the profile photographs of the 11 were made public — declined to disclose whether the plane has a single jet engine or two, or the size of its crew.

The photograph showed a red-tinted, pencil-like plane with swept wings mounted for the rear.

CIA-RDP67B00446R000

Russia does not intend to equal the A.M.

The top speed of the fastest American rotary engine in operation is 10,000 r.p.m. in an hour.

The government's spokesmen said that the new IL-2 performance aircraft "The Ardens" qualifies as a reconnaissance plane. They declined to make comparisons between the IL-2 and the photo-reconnaissance spy plane, the IL-2.

President Johnson said his news conference that development of the A-100 in long-range, supersonic transport plane for eventual commercial use will be "greatly assisted by the lessons learned from this A-11 program."

As an example, he cited the important technological advance in the A-11 project of mastering the metallurgy and fabrication of the metal titanium needed for the skin of aircraft to meet the high friction heat with stresses in flight at more than four times the speed of sound.

The joint arrangements previously made to make this and other important lifeboat developments "available under appropriate safeguards" to the "world" engaged in the successful support program.

...in that connection, the President announced that next Monday he will make public a study and report on the financing and management of the supersonic transport program, which will be a joint undertaking by the federal government and the aircraft industry. On the basis of this report, which was submitted last December, the Johnson administration will decide how the government will proceed, he said.